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THE
INDIAN TREASURY
OF
ENGLISH VERSE

SELECTED AND EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

S. G. DUNN, M.A. (OXON.)

INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE,
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, MUIR CENTRAL
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INTRODUCTION

THE poems collected in this Edition may be divided into three classes, narrative, reflective, and descriptive ; and each class will be found represented in each of the three parts. This arrangement has been made as a convenience to academic bodies that may desire to introduce a selection of English Poetry into their courses, but may consider the whole selection too long.

It is believed that the poems selected are those most suitable for a young Indian audience. Human interest, simplicity and clearness, and purity of thought and language have been the main tests applied in the work of selection. There is much in English poetry of high poetical value, the appeal of which, notwithstanding, does not range beyond the West : that appeal depends for its strength upon sentiments, ideas, and associations that are largely national, local, or historical, and lose much of their meaning in other lands, to other races, amid conditions far different from those that gave them birth.

Many poems, too, that speak with a voice of consolation and encouragement to hearts not unacquainted with the varied experiences of life,

awake but a feeble feeling in the young. Memories of the favourites of one's own boyhood, and some knowledge of the preferences of youth, acquired in the East as well as in the West, should prove a better guide in such a task as this than the promptings, necessarily personal, of a later taste.

Such considerations, the Editor may modestly claim, have been steadily regarded in the work of selection; yet this little volume will show, he trusts, that English poetry still holds inestimable treasures for all who possess, in however small a measure, a knowledge of the English language. For English poetry has a high function to fulfil in India—that land of all others where religions and philosophies have ever flourished—since the English poets can justly claim that they have aimed always at interpreting, with saints and sages, the meaning of life, and the truth that lies hid, we all of us believe, beneath the visible surface of things. To the man engrossed in bodily enjoyment and the man overwhelmed by earthly cares, they have alike proclaimed that ‘all things are not what they seem’; they have united with the priests and philosophers in asserting the existence of the permanent and changeless in the midst of a world that is constantly found to fail us where we seemed most certain.

And all this they tell us in no difficult language of a science or a sect, but in words so

simple and so sweet that even the most unlearned can understand, and the most indolent are charmed to listen. Even if poetry were merely the minister of amusement and ornament of art that some would have it be, yet is that amusement the purest, that art the highest, known to us, nor can we afford to lose an innocent pleasure in a life where such are all too few. But the desire for poetical expression, and the satisfaction derived from such utterance, are as much instincts of our nature as hunger and thirst. The denial of its proper food to the mind, or soul, of a man keeps back his mental or spiritual growth as surely as starvation breaks down the framework of his body. For the health of the body, food and exercise ; for the health of the intellect, learning and thought : but what of that other part of our nature, the soul or spirit, whatever we may call it, the innermost reality that every religion and philosophy declares to be the true man ? We cannot search out its nature as we lay bare the bones of the body and reveal the workings of the brain ; but it exists, and by some subtle sense we recognize at once the man whose ignorance or neglect has fettered its freedom or stunted its growth.

It is to this part of us that the best poetry makes its appeal. Bodily and mental illusions beset us : this *Mâyâ*, as the philosophers call it, encircles us on every side. The poets show us our way of escape : they remind us of the freedom that is ours

always in our apparent slavery : they reveal the unreality of all earthly things.

Yet poetry is not merely a way of escape from Mâyâ : it affords more than a refuge to which we may fly from the troubles of mortality. As such it could give us only a temporary relief, a fleeting consolation. For this life, however illusory, must somehow be lived, since we are here ; if it were not so, suicide would be the only form of ' yoga ' worth anything at all ! The way of escape is the way of conquest, not of flight : the performance of duty, the service of our fellow-beings, the unselfish work for them that comes from love and not from hope of reward, these alone can bring a man peace ; for these poetry gives us encouragement when we are discouraged and confidence in our dismay. Such is the message of English poetry to India, the message of religion and philosophy ; yet poetry teaches in other ways than theirs, not by instruction, but by pleasure and the ' wisdom which comes through pleasure ', by cleansing the emotions and uplifting the imagination, till, listening to its music, we are in tune with eternal truth.

S. G. DUNN.

February, 1912.

OPENING POEM

THE DAY IS DONE

THE day is done, and the darkness
 Falls from the wings of Night,
 As a feather is wafted downward
 From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village 5
 Gleam through the rain and the mist,
 And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
 That my soul cannot resist :

A feeling of sadness and longing,
 That is not akin to pain, 10
 And resembles sorrow only
 As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
 Some simple and heartfelt lay,
 That shall soothe this restless feeling, 15
 And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
 Not from the bards sublime,
 Whose distant footsteps echo
 Through the corridors of Time. 20

THE DAY IS DONE

II

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavour ;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet, 25
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who, through long days of labour,
And nights devoid of ease, 30
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction 35
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice. 40

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

PART I

A PSALM OF LIFE

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
 Life is but an empty dream !
 For the soul is dead that slumbers,
 And things are not what they seem.

Life is real ! Life is earnest ! 5
 And the grave is not its goal ;
 ‘ Dust thou art, to dust returnest ’
 Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
 Is our destined end or way ; 10
 But to act, that each to-morrow
 Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
 And our hearts, though stout and brave,
 Still, like muffled drums, are beating 15
 Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world’s broad field of battle,
 In the bivouac of Life,
 Be not like dumb, driven cattle !
 Be a hero in the strife ! 20

15

Lives of great men all remind us 25
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time—

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

ABOU BEN ADHEM

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase)
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
 And saw—within the moonlight in his room,
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom—
 An angel writing in a book of gold. 5

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
 And to the presence in the room he said,
 ‘What writest thou?’—The vision raised
 its head,

And with a look made of all sweet accord,
 Answered, ‘The names of those who love the
 Lord.’ 10

‘And is mine one?’ said Abou. ‘Nay, not
 so,’

Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
 But cheerly still; and said, ‘I pray thee, then,
 Write me as one that loves his fellow men.’

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next
 night 15

It came again with a great wakening light,
 And showed the names whom love of God had
 blessed,

And lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.

J. H. LEIGH HUNT.

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE

OTHER, the old sea-captain,
 Who dwelt in Helgoland,
 To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,
 Brought a snow-white walrus-tooth,
 Which he held in his brown right hand. 5

His figure was tall and stately,
 Like a boy's his eye appeared ;
 His hair was yellow as hay,
 But threads of a silvery gray
 Gleamed in his tawny beard. 10

Hearty and hale was Other,
 His cheek had the colour of oak ;
 With a kind of laugh in his speech,
 Like the sea-tide on a beach,
 As unto the King he spoke. 15

And Alfred, King of the Saxons,
 Had a book upon his knees,
 And wrote down the wondrous tale
 Of him who was first to sail
 Into the Arctic seas. 20

‘ So far I live to the northward,
No man lives north of me ;
To the east are wild mountain-chains,
And beyond them meres and plains ;
To the westward all is sea. 25

‘ So far I live to the northward,
From the harbour of Skeringshale,
If you only sailed by day,
With a fair wind all the way,
More than a month would you sail. 30

‘ I own six hundred reindeer,
With sheep and swine beside ;
I have tribute from the Finns,
Whalebone and reindeer-skins,
And ropes of walrus-hide. 35

‘ I ploughed the land with horses,
But my heart was ill at ease,
For the old seafaring men
Came to me now and then,
With their sagas of the seas,— 40

‘ Of Iceland and of Greenland,
And the stormy Hebrides,
And the undiscovered deep :—
Oh, I could not eat nor sleep
For thinking of those seas. 45

‘ To the northward stretched the desert,
How far I fain would know ;
So at last I sallied forth,
And three days sailed due north,
As far as the whale-ships go. 50

‘ To the west of me was the ocean,
To the right the desolate shore,
But I did not slacken sail
For the walrus or the whale,
Till after three days more. 55

‘ The days grew longer and longer,
Till they became as one,
And northward through the haze
I saw the sullen blaze
Of the red midnight sun. 60

‘ And then uprose before me,
Upon the water’s edge,
The huge and haggard shape
Of that unknown North Cape,
Whose form is like a wedge. 65

‘ The sea was rough and stormy,
The tempest howled and wailed,
And the sea-fog, like a ghost,
Haunted that dreary coast,
But onward still I sailed. 70

‘ Four days I steered to eastward,
Four days without a night :
Round in a fiery ring
Went the great sun, O King,
With red and lurid light.’ 75

Here Alfred, King of the Saxons,
Ceased writing for a while ;
And raised his eyes from his book,
With a strange and puzzled look,
And an incredulous smile. 80

But Othere, the old sea-captain,
He neither paused nor stirred,
Till the King listened and then
Once more took up his pen,
And wrote down every word. 85

‘ And now the land,’ said Othere,
‘ Bent southward suddenly,
And I followed the curving shore
And ever southward bore
Into a nameless sea. 90

‘ And there we hunted the walrus,
The narwhale, and the seal ;
Ha ! ’twas a noble game !
And like the lightning’s flame
Flew our harpoons of steel. 95

‘ There were six of us all together,
Norsemen of Helgoland ;
In two days and no more
We killed of them three score,
And dragged them to the strand ! ’ 100

Here Alfred the Truth-Teller
Suddenly closed his book,
And lifted his blue eyes,
With doubt and strange surmise
Depicted in their look. 105

And Othere, the old sea-captain,
Stared at him wild and weird,
Then smiled, till his shining teeth
Gleamed white from underneath
His tawny, quivering beard. 110

And to the King of the Saxons,
In witness of the truth,
Raising his noble head,
He stretched his brown hand, and said,
‘ Behold this walrus-tooth ! ’ 115

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

TUBAL CAIN

OLD Tubal Cain was a man of might
 In the days when Earth was young ;
 By the fierce red light of his furnace bright
 The strokes of his hammer rung ;
 And he lifted high his brawny hand 5
 On the iron glowing clear,
 Till the sparks rushed out in scarlet showers,
 As he fashioned the sword and spear.
 And he sang—‘ Hurra for my handiwork !
 Hurra for the spear and sword ! 10
 Hurra for the hand that shall wield them well,
 For he shall be king and lord ! ’

To Tubal Cain came many a one,
 As he wrought by his roaring fire,
 And each one prayed for a strong steel 15
 blade
 As the crown of his desire ;
 And he made them weapons sharp and strong,
 Till they shouted loud for glee,
 And gave him gifts of pearl and gold,
 And spoils of the forest free. 20
 And they sang—‘ Hurra for Tubal Cain,
 Who hath given us strength anew !
 Hurra for the smith, hurra for the fire,
 And hurra for the metal true ! ’

And men, taught wisdom from the past,
In friendship joined their hands, 50
Hung the sword in the hall, the spear on the
wall,
And ploughed the willing lands ;
And sang—‘ Hurra for Tubal Cain !
Our staunch good friend is he ;
And for the ploughshare and the plough 55
To him our praise shall be.’

C. MACKAY.

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS

THERE is not in the wide world a valley so
 sweet
 As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters
 meet ;
 Oh ! the last rays of feeling and life must
 depart,
 Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from
 my heart.

Yet it was not that nature had shed o'er the
 scene 5
 Her purest of crystal and brightest of green ;
 'Twas not her soft magic of streamlet or hill,
 Oh no !—it was something more exquisite still.

'Twas that friends, the belov'd of my bosom,
 were near,
 Who made every dear scene of enchantment
 more dear, 10
 And who felt how the best charms of nature
 improve,
 When we see them reflected from looks that
 we love.

26 THE MEETING OF THE WATERS

Sweet vale of Avoca ! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love
best,

Where the storms that we feel in this cold
world should cease, 15

And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled
in peace.

T. MOORE.

TO DAFFODILS

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see

You haste away so soon :
As yet the early-rising Sun
Has not attained his noon.

Stay, stay, 5
Until the hasting day
Has run

But to the evensong ;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along. 10

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring ;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or any thing.

We die, 15
As your hours do, and dry
Away

Like to the Summer's rain ;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again. 20

R. HERRICK.

SYMPATHY

I LAY in sorrow, deep distressed :
 My grief a proud man heard ;
 His looks were cold, he gave me gold,
 But not a kindly word.
 My sorrow passed,—I paid him back 5
 The gold he gave to me ;
 Then stood erect and spoke my thanks,
 And blessed his Charity.

I lay in want, in grief and pain :
 A poor man passed my way ; 10
 He bound my head, he gave me bread,
 He watched me night and day.
 How shall I pay him back again,
 For all he did to me ?
 Oh, gold is great, but greater far 15
 Is heavenly Sympathy !

C. MACKAY.

PART II

THE BUILDERS

ALL are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time ;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low ; 5
Each thing in its place is best ;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled ; 10
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these ;
Leave no yawning gaps between ;
Think not, because no man sees, 15
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part ;
For the Gods see everywhere. 20

THE BUILDERS

31

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen ;
Make the house, where Gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of Time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

25

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base ; 30
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain, 35
And one boundless reach of sky.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
 The ship was still as she could be,
 Her sails from heaven received no motion,
 Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock 5
 The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock ;
 So little they rose, so little they fell,
 They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
 Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock ; 10
 On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
 And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
 The mariners heard the warning bell ;
 And then they knew the perilous Rock, 15
 And blessed the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in heaven was shining gay,
 All things were joyful on that day ;
 The sea-birds screamed as they wheeled round,
 And there was joyaunce in their sound. 20

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen
A darker speck on the ocean green ;
Sir Ralph the Rover walked his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring, 25
It made him whistle, it made him sing ;
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float ;
Quoth he, ' My men, put out the boat, 30
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok.'

The boat is lowered, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go ;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat, 35
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound,
The bubbles rose and burst around ;
Quoth Sir Ralph, ' The next who comes to the
Rock

Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok.' 40

Sir Ralph the Rover sailed away,
He scoured the seas for many a day ;
And now grown rich with plundered store
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky 45
They cannot see the Sun on high ;
The wind hath blown a gale all day,
At evening it hath died away.

On deck the Rover takes his stand,
So dark it is they see no land. 50
Quoth Sir Ralph, ' It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon.'

' Canst hear,' said one, ' the breakers roar ?
For methinks we should be near the shore.'
' Now where we are I cannot tell, 55
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell.'

They hear no sound, the swell is strong ;
Though the wind hath fallen they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock—
' O Christ ! it is the Inchcape Rock ! ' 60

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair ;
He cursed himself in his despair ;
The waves rush in on every side,
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear 65
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

R. SOUTHEY.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM

BESIDE the ungathered rice he lay,
 His sickle in his hand ;
 His breast was bare, his matted hair
 Was buried in the sand.
 Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep, 5
 He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
 The lordly Niger flowed ;
 Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
 Once more a king he strode ; 10
 And heard the tinkling caravans
 Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
 Among her children stand ;
 They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
 They held him by the hand !— 16
 A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
 And fell into the sand.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day ;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay 46
A worn-out fether, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away !

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

THE WAR SONG OF DINAS VAWR

THE mountain sheep are sweeter,
 But the valley sheep are fatter :
 We therefore deemed it meet
 To carry off the latter.
 We made an expedition ; 5
 We met a host, and quelled it ;
 We forced a strong position,
 And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
 Where herds of kine were browsing, 10
 We made a mighty sally,
 To furnish our carousing.
 Fierce warriors rushed to meet us ;
 We met them, and o'erthrew them :
 They struggled hard to beat us ; 15
 But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
 The king marched forth to catch us :
 His rage surpassed all measure,
 But his people could not match us. 20

WAR SONG OF DINAS VAWR 39

He fled to his hall-pillars ;
And, ere our force we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewildering, 25
Spilt blood enough to swim in :
We orphaned many children,
And widowed many women.
The eagles and the ravens
We gluttoned with our foemen, 30
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle, 35
And the head of him who owned them :
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us ;
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus. 40

T. L. PEACOCK.

RAIN IN SUMMER

How beautiful is the rain !
 After the dust and heat,
 In the broad and fiery street,
 In the narrow lane,
 How beautiful is the rain ! 5

How it clatters along the roofs,
 Like the tramp of hoofs !
 How it gushes and struggles out
 From the throat of the overflowing spout !

Across the window-pane 10
 It pours and pours ;
 And swift and wide,
 With a muddy tide,
 Like a river down the gutter roars
 The rain, the welcome rain ! 15

The sick man from his chamber looks
 At the twisted brooks ;
 He can feel the cool
 Breath of each little pool ;
 His fevered brain 20
 Grows calm again,
 And he breathes a blessing on the rain.

RAIN IN SUMMER

41

From the neighbouring school
Come the boys,
With more than their wonted noise 25
And commotion ;
And down the wet streets
Sail their mimic fleets,
Till the treacherous pool
Ingulfs them in its whirling 30
And turbulent ocean.

In the country, on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,
Stretches the plain, 35
To the dry grass and the drier grain
How welcome is the rain !

In the furrowed land
The toilsome and patient oxen stand ;
Lifting the yoke-encumbered head, 40
With their dilated nostrils spread,
They silently inhale
The clover-scented gale,
And the vapours that arise
From the well-watered and smoking soil. 45
For this rest in the furrow after toil
Their large and lustrous eyes

Seem to thank the Lord,
More than man's spoken word.

Near at hand, 50
From under the sheltering trees,
The farmer sees
His pastures, and his fields of grain,
As they bend their tops
To the numberless beating drops 55
Of the incessant rain.
He counts it as no sin
That he sees therein
Only his own thrift and gain.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

THE DAFFODILS

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host, of golden daffodils,
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees 5
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the milky way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay : 10
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
 A poet could not but be gay 15
 In such a jocund company !
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought ;

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

W. WORDSWORTH.

SONG

THE stars are with the voyager,
 Wherever he may sail ;
 The moon is constant to her time ;
 The sun will never fail,
 But follow, follow round the world, 5
 The green earth and the sea ;
 So love is with the lover's heart,
 Wherever he may be.

Wherever he may be, the stars
 Must daily lose their light ; 10
 The moon will veil her in the shade ;
 The sun will set at night.
 The sun may set, but constant love
 Will shine when he's away ;
 So that dull night is never night, 15
 And day is brighter day.

T. HOOD.

PART III

SOMETHING LEFT UNDONE

LABOUR with what zeal we will,
 Something still remains undone,
 Something uncompleted still
 Waits the rising of the sun.

By the bedside, on the stair, 5
 At the threshold, near the gates,
 With its menace or its prayer,
 Like a mendicant it waits ;

Waits, and will not go away ;
 Waits, and will not be gainsaid ; 10
 By the cares of yesterday
 Each to-day is heavier made ;

Till at length the burden seems
 Greater than our strength can bear,
 Heavy as the weight of dreams, 15
 Pressing on us everywhere.

And we stand from day to day,
 Like the dwarfs of times gone by,
 Who, as northern legends say,
 On their shoulders held the sky. 20

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

THE FAKENHAM GHOST

THE lawns were dry in Euston park ;
 (Here Truth inspires my tale)
 The lonely footpath, still and dark,
 Led over hill and dale.

Benighted was an ancient dame, 5
 And fearful haste she made
 To gain the vale of Fakenham
 And hail its willow shade.

Her footsteps knew no idle stops,
 But followed faster still, 10
 And echoed to the darksome copse
 That whispered on the hill ;

Where clamorous rooks, yet scarcely hushed,
 Bespoke a peopled shade,
 And many a wing the foliage brushed, 15
 And hovering circuits made.

The dappled herd of grazing deer,
 That sought the shades by day,
 Now started from her path with fear,
 And gave the stranger way. 20

THE FAKENHAM GHOST 51

Loud fell the gate against the post ! 45
Her heart-strings like to crack ;
For much she feared the grisly Ghost
Would leap upon her back.

Still on, pat, pat, the goblin went,
As it had done before ; 50
Her strength and resolution spent,
She fainted at the door.

Out came her husband, much surprised,
Out came her daughter dear ;
Good-natured souls ! all unadvised 55
Of what they had to fear.

The candle's gleam pierced through the night,
Some short space o'er the green ;
And there the little trotting sprite
Distinctly might be seen. 60

An ass's foal had lost its dam
Within the spacious park ;
And simple as the playful lamb
Had followed in the dark.

No goblin he ; no imp of sin ; 65
No crimes had ever known ;
They took the shaggy stranger in,
And reared him as their own.

His little hoofs would rattle round
Upon the cottage floor ;
The matron learned to love the sound
That frightened her before.

A favourite the Ghost became,
And 'twas his fate to thrive ;
And long he lived and spread his fame, 75
And kept the joke alive.

For many a laugh went through the vale;
And some conviction too :
Each thought some other goblin tale,
Perhaps, was just as true. 80

R. BLOOMFIELD.

THE PARROT

THE deep affections of the breast
 That Heaven to living things imparts
 Are not exclusively possessed
 By human hearts.

A parrot from the Spanish Main, 5
 Full young and early caged, came o'er
 With bright wings to the bleak domain
 Of Mulla's shore.

To spicy groves where he had won
 His plumage of resplendent hue, 10
 His native fruits and skies and sun,
 He bade adieu.

For these he changed the smoke of turf,
 A heathery land and misty sky,
 And turned on rocks and raging surf 15
 His golden eye.

But, petted, in our climate cold
 He lived and chattered many a day ;
 Until with age from green and gold
 His wings grew gray. 20

At last, when blind and seeming dumb,
He scolded, laughed, and spoke no more,
A Spanish stranger chanced to come
To Mulla's shore ;

He hailed the bird in Spanish speech ; 25
The bird in Spanish speech replied,
Flapped round his cage with joyous screech,
Dropped down, and died.

T. CAMPBELL.

BENDEMEER'S STREAM

THERE 's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's
 stream,
 And the nightingale sings round it all the
 day long ;
 In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet
 dream,
 To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song.

That bower and its music I never forget, 5
 But oft when alone, in the bloom of the year,
 I think—is the nightingale singing there yet ?
 Are the roses still bright by the calm Ben-
 demeer ?

No, the roses soon withered that hung o'er
 the wave,
 But some blossoms were gathered, while
 freshly they shone, 10
 And a dew was distilled from their flowers,
 that gave
 All the fragrance of summer, when summer
 was gone.

56 BENDEMEER'S STREAM

Thus memory draws from delight, e'er it dies,
 An essence that breathes of it many a year ;
Thus bright to my soul, as 'twas then to my
 eyes, 15
Is that bower on the banks of the calm
 Bendemeer !

T. MOORE.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
 Yon solitary Highland Lass !
 Reaping and singing by herself ;
 Stop here, or gently pass !
 Alone she cuts and binds the grain, 5
 And sings a melancholy strain ;
 Oh, listen ! for the vale profound
 Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
 More welcome notes to weary bands 10
 Of travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian sands :
 A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
 In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas 15
 Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?—
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
 For old, unhappy, far-off things,
 And battles long ago : 20

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again !

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang 25
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;
I listened, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill, 30
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

W. WORDSWORTH.

THE SOLITUDE OF ALEXANDER SELKIRK

I AM monarch of all I survey ;
 My right there is none to dispute ;
 From the centre all round to the sea
 I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
 O solitude ! where are the charms 5
 That sages have seen in thy face ?
 Better dwell in the midst of alarms
 Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
 I must finish my journey alone, 10
 Never hear the sweet music of speech ;
 I start at the sound of my own.
 The beasts that roam over the plain
 My form with indifference see ;
 They are so unacquainted with man, 15
 Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
 Divinely bestowed upon man,
 Oh, had I the wings of a dove
 How soon would I taste you again ! 20

My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Ye winds that have made me your sport, 25
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me ? 30
Oh, tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind !
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind, 35
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land
In a moment I seem to be there ;
But alas ! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair. 40

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair ;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.

ALEXANDER SELKIRK 61

There is mercy in every place, 45
And mercy, encouraging thought !
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

W. COWPER.

THE LOST DAY

FAREWELL, O day misspent ;
 Thy fleeting hours were lent
 In vain to my endeavour.
 In shade and sun
 Thy race is run 5
 For ever ! oh, for ever !
 The leaf drops from the tree,
 The sand falls in the glass,
 And to the dread Eternity
 The dying minutes pass. 10

It was not till thine end
 I knew thou wert my friend ;
 But now thy worth recalling,
 My grief is strong,
 I did thee wrong, 15
 And scorned thy treasures falling.
 But sorrow comes too late ;
 Another day is born ;—
 Pass, minutes, pass ; may better fate,
 Attend tomorrow morn. 20

THE LOST DAY

63

Oh, birth ! Oh, death of Time !

Oh, mystery sublime !

Ever the rippling ocean

Brings forth the wave

To smile or rave, 25

And die of its own motion,

A little wave to strike

The sad responsive shore,

And be succeeded by its like

Ever and evermore. 30

A change from same to same,—

A quenched, yet burning flame,—

A new birth, born of dying,—

A transient ray,

A speck of day, 35

Approaching and yet flying.

Pass to Eternity,

O day, that came in vain !

A new wave surges on the sea—

The world grows young again. 40

Come in, To-day, come in !

I have confessed my sin

To thee, young promise-bearer !

New Lord of Earth !

I hail thy birth :— 45

The crown awaits the wearer.

Child of the ages past !

Sire of a mightier line !

On the same deeps our lot is cast !

The world is thine—and mine ! 50

C. MACKAY.

TO BLOSSOMS

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
 Why do ye fall so fast ?
 Your date is not so past,
 But you may stay yet here awhile
 To blush and gently smile, 5
 And go at last.

What, were ye born to be
 An hour or half's delight,
 And so to bid good-night ?
 'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth 10
 Merely to show your worth,
 And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
 May read how soon things have
 Their end, though ne'er so brave ; 15
 And after they have shown their pride
 Like you, awhile, they glide
 Into the grave.

R. HERRICK.

CLOSING POEM

AUTUMN

OH, what a glory doth this world put on
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent!
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves, 5
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent
teachings.

He shall so hear the solemn hymn that Death
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
To his long resting-place without a tear.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD

1766-1823

Bloomfield began life as a farmer's boy, but he became inspired with enthusiasm for literature and went up to London to write of the country life he knew so well. He is filled with a love of nature, such as we find in Wordsworth, and he can tell a tale in simple and pure English. He died in poverty, after many attempts to reach fame.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

1777-1844

A member of the famous Scottish family of Campbells, at the age of twenty this poet was at Edinburgh and became known to Scott and other literary men.

In 1799 his book, *Pleasures of Hope*, brought him immediate success ; but he was indolent and could not write except under the influence of strong emotion ; his fame, in consequence, exceeded his fortune.

He is remembered chiefly for his lyrics.

WILLIAM COWPER

1731-1800

Educated at Westminster School, Cowper studied law and was called to the bar. But his nervous disposition and delicate health unfitted him for a strenuous life. He was often a prey to deep melancholy, and at

times his mind gave way, till in 1796 he broke down completely.

There is a simple pathos in his best poems that is the result of his loving and generous nature, and the terrible trials to which it was subjected. He who had felt the loneliness that mental suffering forces upon a man, could well imagine the feelings of a Selkirk 'out of humanity's reach'. He, too, was a castaway. He may be regarded as a prototype of Wordsworth in his devotion to nature and delight in country life,

ROBERT HERRICK

1591-1674

After some years at Cambridge Herrick became a priest of the English Church, and was put in charge of a parish in Devonshire. He was a friend of Ben Jonson and the literary men of his time, and he delighted to celebrate in little verses the customs and seasons of the country district in which he lived. The brevity of his poems renders their vigour and freshness all the more conspicuous.

THOMAS HOOD

1799-1845

The son of a bookseller, Hood early began to write books himself.

In 1821 he was assistant sub-editor of the *London Magazine*, and became acquainted with the chief literary men of his day. He had sound sense, observation,

and keen wit, and he used these in the attempt to reform many social evils. He wrote, for example, the 'Song of the Shirt', in which he describes the sorrows of a poor woman working night and day at making shirts to earn but a few pence. He must be honoured as one of the first to employ the art of the writer to awaken the imagination of the public in the interests of social reform, while his sense of humour preserved him from confounding the functions of the preacher and the poet.

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

1784-1859

'For some time after I left school', says Hunt, 'I did nothing but visit my school-fellows, haunt bookstalls, and write verses.'

The child was father of the man. All his life Hunt was writing and criticizing literature; all his life he was dependent upon friends in money matters.

He became editor in 1808 of a paper called *The Examiner*; in 1812 he was prosecuted and imprisoned for an attack in it upon the Prince Regent. This won for him the friendship of Byron.

In 1822 he went to join Shelley and Byron in Italy to start a new journal. But Shelley died, and Byron and Hunt did not suit one another. He lived in Italy for a while, then came home, and had a hard struggle with poverty till in 1847 he was granted a pension.

He excelled especially in his narrative poetry, of which 'Abou Ben Adhem' is a good example.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807-82

The life of Longfellow, the greatest poet America has yet produced, presents no striking incidents. His boyhood was spent in his native town, and at fourteen he went to college. He became a Professor of Modern Languages and travelled in Europe and England.

In 1835 he was made Professor at Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass., the oldest college in America. In 1868 he again visited Europe; Kingsley, who met him on this visit, says that Longfellow's was the most beautiful human face he had ever seen.

A friend said of him that he could never be brought to find fault with anybody or anything. He was modest and kind-hearted; 'his highest ambition was to be a perfect man, and through sympathy and love to help others to be the same.'

His poetry deals much with tender or pathetic incidents in human life; with heroic deeds recorded in legend and history; above all, with those aspects of nature that appeal to the human heart by their quiet beauty, or through their historical associations. Deeply convinced of the value and importance of life, he never permitted his poetry to be merely ornamental; in all he wrote he had a moral purpose.

His language is simple and his thoughts are never difficult to follow.

His songs 'gushed from his heart', and they too 'have power to quiet the restless pulse of care.'

CHARLES MACKAY

1814-89

Scottish by birth, Mackay began writing poetry while serving as a private secretary in Belgium. In 1832 he returned to London and worked as a journalist. He was the author of a number of songs which were set to music and proved very popular. During his later years he produced many volumes both of prose and poetry.

THOMAS MOORE

1779-1852

Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, Moore crossed over to London and became a great favourite in the best society of the capital. He had much personal charm, and this added to his popularity as a poet.

In 1803 he went to the Bermudas to fill a Government post, but returned in less than a year. He could not bear separation from his many friends. He gained large sums from the sale of his poems, but spent freely. He had trouble with his sons, and in 1846, after the death of his last child, the gay and genial Moore broke down.

His lyrics have the quality of music; their charm lies in the melody of the words rather than in the thought expressed.

He was never in the East, but his poem on Persia and Kashmir, 'Lalla Rookh,' was sung, a friend told

him, 'in the streets of Ispahan.' We may forgive a friend's exaggeration, but certain it is that Moore's descriptions of the vale of Kashmir strike visitors to that beautiful land as singularly apt and pleasing.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

1785-1866

Peacock is better known as a novelist than as a poet.

He held for many years a post at the India Office, and performed much useful work for the East India Company, by whom he was given a pension. He married a Welsh woman ; hence his interest in Wales.

The strong common sense which marks his novels appears in the poem given here. Peacock had no illusions about that savage age which some writers of his time commemorated as the 'age of romance and chivalry' !

ROBERT SOUTHEY

1774-1843

Southey was born at Bristol ; he went to Oxford, travelled and tried several professions, but finally settled at Keswick in the Lake District, and spent his life in writing prose and verse. He owed much intellectually to Coleridge, but his mind was too narrow to develop originally the ideas he gained from him. He was a friend of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Landor, and in 1813 was Poet Laureate.

He wrote much, but little that he wrote is of interest now, because he reflected only the general thoughts of his contemporaries and added little of his own. His *Life of Nelson*, however, remains a model of restrained style in prose.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770-1850

Born in the Lake District of the north of England, Wordsworth was brought up among scenes of natural beauty and men of simple speech. When only a boy, he tells us, he noticed the infinite variety of natural objects capable of affording pleasure to the eye and mind, yet unperceived 'by poets of any age or country', and he 'resolved to supply the deficiency'.

He studied at Cambridge, and in 1791 went to France. The revolution in that country turned his thoughts to the possibility of a simpler way of living than the artificial life of so many people in towns. He met Coleridge, and in 1798 they published together a book of Lyrical Ballads. This was an attempt to produce a poetry dealing with nature and natural emotions in simple language.

Wordsworth went back to live among the mountains. The men of his time thought of such solitary places as wild and unlovely; they sought ideas from the society of men. Wordsworth believed that ideas, moral ideas, can be received from trees and stones; that to live

a true life, man must live in close contact with nature ;

One impulse from the vernal wood
Can teach us more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

He felt that nature was not dead, but alive ; ‘ something ’ dwelt in these rocks and stones and trees, and that ‘ something ’ he found, too, in the mind of man.

Wordsworth was, therefore, a new poet ; he chose new subjects for his poems, and he put them in a new form ; for he believed that the natural language of poetry was not the scholarly language used by previous poets, but the simple tongue of the people among whom he lived.

His poems will be of perpetual value, for he seeks in nature not merely scenes to charm the eye, but truths that, amid these changing seasons, never perish.

NOTES

THE DAY IS DONE. *Longfellow*

In this little poem the author shows us how poetry may be used when we are sad or weary, to comfort and refresh us by causing us to forget our own troubles and our own labours.

2. *wings of Night*. The poet thinks of Night as a great being that flies over the earth, covering it with mighty wings. The silent approach of darkness is suggested by comparing it to a feather dropping down gently through the air from an eagle.

9. *longing*, i.e. a desire to escape from the cares of daily life.

10. *akin*, i.e. like, as blood-relations are like one another.

12. *as the mist*, &c. The mist is like rain in that it is damp and hides the sun ; so this feeling is like sorrow in that it saddens the mind a little and takes away joy ; but as the mist is softer and lighter than rain, so this feeling is not as keen or heavy as real sorrow.

14. *lay*, a short poem meant to be sung.

16. *banish*, send out of the mind, even as we send criminals out of the country.

17. *masters*, the great poets who are acknowledged by all to be masters of their art.

20. *whose distant footsteps*, &c. Life is like a vast house through the passages, or corridors, of which we pass ; these poets, with their lofty thoughts, are far ahead of us ; we only hear their footsteps in the distance.

21. *martial music*, sounds of military music played to inspirit the soldiers for the fight to which they are

marching. We cannot hear this music without thinking of war; we cannot read these poems without thinking of the battle of life.

23. *endless*, because there is always some good act to be done, some evil act to be avoided.

26. *gushed*, flowed freely, like water from a spring.

34. *restless pulse*. Care or anxiety acts upon us like fever, and in fever the pulse beats quicker than in health.

35. *benediction*, the blessing of the priest given to the people when their prayers are finished and they turn to go home.

37. *treasured*, carefully kept because it is worth so much at times like this.

39. *lend*, &c. The beauty of the voice will add to the beauty of the poem.

41. *music*. Poetry is like music because it is an arrangement of beautiful sounds.

42. *infest*, swarm all round us, like vermin, during the day.

43. *like the Arabs*, who wander across the desert, pitching their tents in a new place each night. When they are gone no trace is left of them. So these cares shall leave us altogether.

We may note in this poem, as in all poems, how the words chosen suggest pictures to our minds. To understand a poem and enjoy it, we must not only know what the words mean, we must see in our minds the pictures they suggest. The words 'feather', 'mist', 'gush', 'pulse', 'benediction', 'infest', 'Arabs', are all chosen by the poet with a special purpose. Any dictionary will tell us their meaning; but we must find out for ourselves why the poet chose them. That is one reason why poetry is valuable; it stirs up the imagination and makes us observant.

PART I

PSALM OF LIFE. *Longfellow*

Psalm, a sacred song of the Hebrews. Many of these psalms are filled with laments for the shortness of life and the vanity, or uselessness, of it.

Longfellow expresses here the other view of life. No doubt there is much to make us sad in life and much to disgust us; we soon find out that no pleasure is permanent, that all around us is subject to change and decay, that we cannot be fully happy here; as the Hindu philosopher would say, 'All is Mâyâ.' But, says Longfellow, we cannot gain freedom from this Mâyâ by idleness and slackness; life has its duties for each one of us; only by fulfilling these can we gain the happiness for which we long, the happiness this life cannot give us. We can only escape from the evils of life by conquering, not by avoiding, them. 'This my Mâyâ is divine, very difficult to cross. Yet those that come unto Me, I cause them to cross this river of life.' The same message is given to us by all the saints and sages of the world, in all ages and all countries.

1. *numbers, verses.*

3. *soul is dead.* If we treat life as a dream, we are like men asleep, as good as dead. In a dream things happen to us and we have no power over them; in life we have power over events and can control them.

7. '*Dust, &c.*,' a quotation from a Psalm.
end, good; that for which we aim.

12. *finds us farther*, i. e. more perfect, farther on the road to perfection.

13. *Art is long.* Perfection in any art needs long practice, and a life-time is all too short to gain it.

16. *Funeral marches.* At a soldier's funeral the drums are muffled, or covered with black cloth, to deaden the sound and render it more solemn. However strong we are, we are daily nearer death.

18. *bivouac*, an encampment for the night without

tents. An army engaged in a hurried march after some swift enemy would thus bivouac to save time.

20. *hero*, a leader of men, a doer of great deeds, such as the heroes of ancient epics.

21. *Trust*, i. e. do not let yourself think how happy you may be if you attain some desire, and do not give yourself up to regrets for the past, since the past is gone and cannot return, even as the dead are seen no more here.

23. *living*, as compared with the dead past and the unborn future.

24. *Heart within*, i. e. trust in your own courage, and the help of God.

26. *sublime*. The word literally means 'raised up'—something we 'look up to', or admire.

28. *sands of time*. Here, by metaphor, the poet speaks of life as an ocean, and time as the sand of its shore. The ocean is called 'solemn' because life is a serious business.

31. *a forlorn and shipwrecked brother*, i. e. one who has failed in life, made some bad mistake, and thinks he has no friends to care for him. The example, however, of others' lives shows him that no failure cannot be turned into a success; no one need despair.

34. *heart for any fate*, courage to meet any event.

35. *achieving*, performing some duty.

pursuing, trying to gain perfection.

36. *Learn to wait*, the final lesson of life. Do not be in a hurry to see the results of your labour, nor discontented if it seems to gain no reward.

ABOU BEN ADHEM. *Leigh Hunt*

A little story showing that the best way to serve God is to help our fellow men. Work for humanity is the greatest of all religious duties.

9. *made of all sweet accord*, a look full of peace and sympathy.

13. *cheerly*, hopefully, brightly, like the more common 'cheerfully'.

17. *the names whom*, short for 'the names of those whom'.

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE. *Longfellow*

This poem deals with the desire of exploring the unknown parts of the world that has urged men to endure all kinds of hardships, with no hope of any gain but further knowledge of the lands that lie beyond the seas.

2. *Helgoland*, Helogaland or Helgeland in the north of Norway; not the island of Heligoland in the North Sea.

3. *Alfred*, called 'The Great', was king in England about A.D. 871-901. He beat back the Danes.

4. *walrus*, an animal with long tusks that lives in the northern, or arctic regions, partly on land and partly in the sea.

11. *bale*, healthy, strong.

12. *colour of oak*. His skin was brown through exposure to sun and wind.

24. *meres*, lakes and swamps.

31. *reindeer*, deer used for drawing sledges over the snow.

33. *Finns*, a people of north-west Russia.

40. *sagas*, stories, mostly in verse.

42. *Hebrides*, islands to the north-west of Scotland.

50. *whale-ships*, ships that go after the whales, which are valued for the oil they contain and the whalebone.

53. *slacken sail*, take in some of the sails and so go slower.

54. *For*, i. e. in order to kill.

60. *midnight sun*. In the extreme north the sun does not go below the horizon in summer: there is no night.

64. *North Cape*, the north of Norway, as we know it now.

92. *narwhale*, a kind of small whale with horns.

seal, an animal that lives mostly in the water and feeds on fish. Hunted for its oil, skin, and fur.

barpoons, spears with rope attached.

97. *Norsemen*, i. e. North men.
strand, shore.

TUBAL CAIN. *Charles Mackay*

Tubal Cain, according to the Hebrew traditions, was the first worker in metals.

- 5. *brawny*, muscular, strong.
- 6. *glowing clear*, red-hot.
- 9. *handiwork*, the work of my hand.
- 16. *crown*, his greatest desire.
- 39. *ore*, the unworked metal.
- 52. *willing*, lands that generously repaid the labour of tillage.

This little poem shows, in the form of a story, how men have learned that peace is better than war; to do good service for one's fellow men is a far nobler thing than was ever done by those heroes of the old poets, whose pride it was to lay waste cities and number thousands among their slaves and captives. Yet an army is necessary in a country to suppress wrong-doers and repel invaders.

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS. *Thomas Moore*

This poem contains an idea which we shall find suggested in many other poems, that the charm of beautiful places is due not only to their natural beauty but also to the ideas and memories which the sight of them awakens in our minds—their associations. We love our homes not because they are more beautiful than other places—they may not be so fair as many others in the world—but because those we love have lived there.

- 2. *in whose bosom*, in the centre of which.
- 3. *rays*. Feeling is like the sun and warms the heart.
- 4. *bloom*, the fresh beauty.
- 6. *crystal and green*. These words refer to the waters and the grass, the streams and the trees.

7. *soft magic*. Nature is like a magician, her works and their effect on our minds are so wonderful.

8. *exquisite*, sought from far away and therefore rare and valuable.

9. *bosom*, or heart.

12. *reflected*. We enjoy a lovely sight all the more if we have dear companions to share it.

TO DAFFODILS. *Robert Herrick*

Daffodils are delicate yellow flowers that appear in the English spring. They are welcomed not only for their beauty but for the sign they give that the long winter with its cold and gloom is over and the season of flowers and fruits at hand.

Herrick laments the short life of all lovely things; man, too, has but a little time to live, and is saddened by the loss, one after another, of friends he has come to love.

This is one thought the sight of beautiful things may suggest, the sadness of their short stay in our presence. We shall see in a poem of Wordsworth how quite a different view of them may be taken.

6. *basting day*, the day is over all too quickly.

8. *evensong*, the time of evening prayer and song of praise for the past day. Herrick was a priest, and his mind would naturally think of the evensong as the fitting close of the day.

12. *spring*. The spring of a man is his youth. After that age we grow old and 'meet decay'.

We are a part of Nature as are the daffodils and all things.

SYMPATHY. *Charles Mackay*

All our gifts to another are of no worth unless we give ourselves. Such is the meaning of sympathy—feeling with another and sharing our joys and sorrows with him, not only our goods and deeds.

8. *Charity*, almsgiving.

PART II

THE BUILDERS. *Longfellow*

We are all builders under the great Architect of the Universe. No act of ours but has its place in the scheme of things; no matter how humble, how apparently unimportant our work, the whole world will suffer if we do that work ill.

In the same way, every act of ours has its effect upon our character; we are building up that character day by day, and hour by hour; its growth, good or bad, depends upon our acts and thoughts, however trifling each may seem at the moment.

Here, as in other poems, Longfellow tries to show how serious life is for each one of us. 'Life is real! life is earnest!'

1. *of Fate*, under Fate, working for the Power that controls the universe.

2. *walls of Time*. The history of the world is compared to a building; each generation builds and adds to the building, well or ill.

3. *massive deeds . . . ornaments of rhyme*. Notice the contrast. A man's deeds are, after all, more important than his words.

7. *idle show*. Some say that poetry is useless, a mere ornament. Yet, says Longfellow, it has its place. In his poem 'The Day is Done', he shows us how poetry can strengthen and support.

10. *materials*. Time past and present provides materials for the building.

12. *the blocks, &c.* Our future is determined by our past and present; we shall be what we make ourselves. A man reaps what he sows.

14. *yawning gaps*. Longfellow thinks of the honest builder who fits each stone exactly to the other so that the blocks are well and truly laid.

27. *Broken stairways*. Small duties unperformed to-day will hinder all our future work.

33. *Thus alone can we attain.* Longfellow asserts that a man can only come to understand the universe by carrying out faithfully his own work. There are no short cuts to enlightenment.

THE INCHCAPE ROCK. *Robert Southey*

A simple story of how a spiteful action resulted in disaster to the doer of it.

3. *heaven*, the upper air where the winds blow freely.

4. *keel*, the lowest timber of the vessel, on which the whole framework is built up.

6. *Inchcape Rock*, off the east coast of Scotland.

9. *Abbot*, the head of a monastery.

Aberbrothok, the modern Arbroath, on the east coast of Scotland.

11. *buoy*, a fixed float.

19. *wheel'd*, turned about.

21. *joyaunce*, an old word for happiness, joy.

23. *Rover*, a wandering pirate, or sea-robber.

42. *scour'd*, searched over the seas for ships to capture.

47. *gale*. When the wind blows hard, sailors say it is 'blowing a gale'.

53. *breakers*, the waves breaking on the shore.

57. *swell*, heaving sea after a storm.

59. *shivering shock*, the ship quivers at the shock.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM. *Longfellow*

The Americans kept up the practice of slave labour in the nineteenth century. The Civil War between the northern and southern states of America in 1861-5 was fought largely on this question. After the war slavery was abolished.

The slave in this poem had been captured in Africa by the slave-traders and brought over to work in the rice-fields of some southern state in America. He dreams of his native land and the time when he was not a slave, and in his sleep death sets him free.

2. *sickle*, curved knife used for reaping.

3. *matted*, stuck together in a thick mass.

8. *Niger*, an African river.

29. *Caffre buts*. The Caffres are a South African race.

33. *river-horse*, the hippopotamus, as it is usually called, after the Greek.

37. *myriad tongues*, of bird and beast, and the wind in the trees.

47. *fetter*. The body is often called the prison of the soul.

THE WAR SONG OF DINAS VAWR. *T. L. Peacock*

This was written by Peacock as a joke in imitation of those old ballads which are full of battle and bloodshed.

Dinas Vawr is in North Wales, and was once a famous stronghold in the days when the tribes of Wales were always fighting one another.

Dyfed was one of the kingdoms of South Wales, and between the north and the south a feud always existed. The period is well before the twelfth century, and the savage and lawless violence of the time is well depicted.

12. *carousing*, feasting.

17. *prize*, the captured cattle.

40. *chorus*, his overthrow gave us a subject for our song.

RAIN IN SUMMER. *Longfellow*

Though written in America, this poem might well have been written in India during the monsoon.

9. *spout*, the spout or outlet of the gutter round the roof.

14. *gutter*, the paved channel for the water at the side of the street.

17. *twisted brooks*. The water is whirling and twisting about as it rushes down the brooks or nullahs.

28. *mimic fleets*. The boys make paper boats and sail them down the streams.

THE DAFFODILS. *Wordsworth*

This little poem should be compared with Herrick's on the same subject. Here Wordsworth tells us of the joy, and not the sadness, that the sight of the dancing daffodils may bring to the mind. It is a favourite idea of his that there is much pleasure to be gained by simply looking at flowers and natural objects and letting their beauty sink into the mind, without any thought about them on our part. He believes, as he says elsewhere,

‘that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.’

No touch of sadness mars its joyous life, nor should we be sad.

Another source of quiet joy to Wordsworth is not only the actual sight of beautiful things, but the memory of them afterwards. The memory ‘hath eyes’, and can give us

‘new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.’

Certain it is that if we use our eyes when we are out among the fields and trees, beneath the clouds and sunsets of the wide sky, we shall have many a pleasant picture to look upon in our memory when we can only lie upon a couch at home.

1. *cloud*. In comparing himself to a cloud Wordsworth not only refers to his loneliness, but to the aimless way of his wandering.

3. *crowd, host, beside the lake, beneath the trees*. Notice how the repetition gives us the idea of numbers, and brings up the picture before us; we not only see the daffodils, but the trees and the lake.

6. *Fluttering* alone would merely show us their movement; ‘dancing’ at once suggests their joy.

7. *shine and twinkle*. The comparison not only gives us the brightness but the movement of the flowers.

8. *milky way*, a band of countless stars seen stretching across the sky. Called the 'milky way' from the 'whiteness' of the stars.

12. *sprightly*, lively and gay.

20. *vacant*, idle, thoughtless, at leisure.

21. *inward eye*, of memory.

22. *bliss of solitude*, which makes one glad to be alone.

This little poem should be carefully meditated, for it is one of the most perfect Wordsworth, or any other poet, has written. I have but indicated the line of study; poetical beauties must be seen, they cannot be explained.

THE STARS ARE WITH THE VOYAGER. *Thomas Hood*

True love alone is the same everywhere and for ever.

3. *constant to her time*, rises, waxes, and wanes in due season.

11. *her*, herself.

shade, of clouds.

PART III

SOMETHING LEFT UNDONE. *Longfellow*

Man's work is never finished; there is something more always to be done.

1. *with what zeal*, i.e. however hard.

7. *menace or prayer*, i.e. we fear what may happen to us if we leave it undone, or we feel that it ought to be done.

10. *gainsaid*, denied, argued away.

15. *weight of dreams*. Often in dreams we have a strange feeling of oppression.

THE FAKENHAM GHOST. *Robert Bloomfield*

1. *lawns*, ground covered with turf, or grass.
Euston, now a part of London.
2. *Truth inspires*. Old poets used to appeal to the goddesses of poetry, the Muses, to inspire them. Here the poet suggests that his tale is true.
5. *Benighted*, night came on before she had reached her home.
8. *bail its willow shade*, see with joy the shade of its willow-trees; her home would then be near.
11. *copse*, small wood.
12. *whispered*. A light wind stirred the trees so that they seemed to be whispering together.
14. *peopled shade*. The birds settle down for the night in the branches; their cries, as they settle, show that there are many birds in the shadow of the trees though they cannot be seen.
16. *hovering circuits*. The rooks fly round before choosing a branch.
17. *dappled*, spotted.
24. *patting*. This word imitates the sound of a foot-fall.
35. *cheating*, because in the half-light we do not see distinctly.
47. *goblin*, ghost or evil spirit.
55. *unadvised*, without warning.
61. *dam*, mother.
65. *imp*, demon.
66. *shaggy*, with rough hair.

THE PARROT. *Thomas Campbell*

This story of a parrot brought from its home to the British Isles illustrates the love of a native land which exists in animals as well as men.

5. *Spanish main*. The mainland of South America.

Spain was the first country to own colonies there. The phrase is also used of the seas in those parts.

8. *Mulla*. In Scotland.

10. *plumage*, feathers.

resplendent, bright.

13. *smoke of turf*. In Scotland turf, or peat, is sometimes burned instead of coal.

14. *beather*, a plant with a purple bloom; it grows in great abundance on the hills.

25. *Spanish speech*. Parrots can be taught to speak. The sound of the language of its native land reminded the bird of its home, and it died of its patriotic emotion.

BENDEMEER'S STREAM. *Thomas Moore*

This little song is taken from 'Lalla Rookh', Moore's long poem on Kashmir. The Bendemeer, according to Moore, is a river which flows near the ruins of Chilminar. Just as we may make perfume from roses which shall smell sweet when the roses are long dead, so memory preserves pleasure for us in the mind.

14. *breathes of it*, has a fragrance of it.

THE REAPER. *Wordsworth*

2. *Higbland Lass*, a peasant girl in the hills of northern Scotland.

3. *reaping*, cutting the corn with a sickle or curved knife.

7. *profound*, deep.

14. *cuckoo-bird*, a bird that visits the north of Europe in early summer, and therefore welcomed, like the daffodil, as a sign that winter is past.

16. *Hebrides*, islands to the north-west of Scotland.

18. *plaintive*, sad.

25. *ibeme*, subject.

31. *music in my heart I bore.* Here Wordsworth again illustrates his favourite conviction that we may find pleasure all over the earth, and the memory will keep it ever present with us.

THE SOLITUDE OF ALEXANDER SELKIRK. *Cowper*

Alexander Selkirk (1676-1721) ran away from his home in Scotland and went to sea. He was engaged in several piratical expeditions in the South Seas, and became a sailing master. In 1704 he had a dispute with the captain of his ship, and at his own request was put ashore on the island of Juan Fernandez; he here lived alone for four years; he was then taken off by a Captain Rogers, and given a ship to command. He returned home in 1712 but went off to sea again, and died a lieutenant of the Royal Navy. His adventurous life gave Defoe the model of his story *Robinson Crusoe*. Cowper saw in the solitude of Selkirk a parallel to his own case, cut off, as he was, by melancholy and gloomy madness from the cheerful intercourse of friends.

21. *assuage*, lessen.

24. *sallies*, jests.

36. *arrows of light*, rays of sunlight.

44. *cabin*, hut.

THE LOST DAY. *Charles Mackay*

Every day has its duties and its worth. Our life is short, and we cannot afford to lose a single day in idleness.

2. *lent*. Time is compared with money lent to a man for some purpose; shall he lose it, or spend it otherwise than was intended?

8. *sand falls in the glass*. A reference to the old way of measuring time by means of a fixed quantity of sand falling constantly from one glass into another.

Once gone, the day cannot be recalled, just as we cannot put back the leaf upon the tree.

16. *treasures*, i. e. all the opportunities the day offered.

23. *rippling ocean*. Here, as in Longfellow, Time is compared to an ocean; the days are the waves that succeed one another, break on the shore, and are drawn back into the sea, Eternity, dying of their own motion as they break.

31. *a change*. Here follow various similes to express how day follows day, and yet not one day is the same as another; just as you may light one flame from another and yet find they are not the same flame.

40. *world grows young again*. Each day we have a fresh opportunity; the world is new every morning for us.

'Let the dead Past bury its dead.'

45. *On the same deep our lot is cast!* Fate assigns us each our task on the same Ocean of Time.

TO BLOSSOMS. Robert Herrick

1. *pledges*. The blossom contains the undeveloped fruit. In an English spring the cherry and apple-trees are covered with pink and white blossoms, very beautiful but soon falling, leaving the fruit to grow and ripen.

3. *date*, time for fading.

5. *blush*. This word aptly suggests the pink and white blossoms.

15. *brave*, gay and fair.

16. *pride*, beauty, a source of pride.

This little poem illustrates the working of a poet's mind. He is first attracted by the beauty of the blossoms; he is then led on to meditate on the short time they are here; thence he turns to human life, and the similar fate of all we set our hearts upon. The 'prose' man would see the blossoms, but they would only suggest to him the possibility of future fruit.

The poet is a disinterested observer.

AUTUMN. *Longfellow*

These thoughts upon the close of the year seem fitting to the close of this selection of poems ; for it is poetry that interprets for us the 'eloquent teachings' of nature.

5. *yellow leaves*. The leaves turn yellow in autumn before falling.

6. *eloquent teachings*, such, for example, as Herrick draws from the sight of blossoms.

9. *without a tear*. There is nothing sad in the yearly death, in the autumn, of flowers and foliage ; we know that their life goes back into the life of universal nature ; nothing is lost. Neither should we be sad at the death of noble men ; their lives rejoin the life that gave them birth. Longfellow expresses in Western language what was long since uttered in the East, 'He who sees in this world of manifoldness that One through all ; in this world of death he who finds that one Infinite Life ; unto him belongs eternal peace.'

THE END

